

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-12 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AGRE-00 EB-08
/105 W

-----020115 051357Z /41

R 051143Z JUL 78
FM AMCONSUL MUNICH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0568
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USBERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: BAVARIAN FDP CHIEF STAKES OUT RELATIVELY
- CONSERVATIVE POSITIONS

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. AT ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
BAVARIAN FDP IN NUERNBERG JULY 1, PARTY CHAIRMAN JOSEF
ERTL, WHO IS THE FEDERAL MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE,
PUT FORTH A PLATFORM WHICH WAS REMINISCENT IN SOME RESPECTS
OF POSITIONS ADVOCATED BY FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS AND THE CSU.
ERTL CLEARLY INTENDS TO LEAD HIS PARTY INTO THE OCTOBER 15
BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTIONS ON A PLATFORM WHICH IS CONSID-
ERABLY TO THE RIGHT OF THE HESSIAN FDP. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS KEYNOTE SPEECH TO THE CONVENTION DELEGATES,
ERTL OUTLINED A PROGRAM AIMED AT KEEPING HIS PARTY ABOVE
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THE FIVE PERCENT BARRIER. ALTHOUGH HE CRITICIZED STRAUSS'
HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE FDP, ERTL SOUNDED SEVERAL
THEMES WHICH BAVARIANS ASSOCIATE WITH STRAUSS, NAMELY THE
ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF A GERMAN NATION, THE
RELATIVE LACK OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG WEST GERMAN
YOUTH, AND THE "GESAMTSCHULE."

3. ERTL CLAIMED THAT THE FDP WAS THE ONLY PARTY WHICH DEFENDED THE CONCEPT OF THE GERMAN NATION IN THE GREEN DAYS OF THE IMMEDIATE POST-WWII PERIOD. HE ALSO CRITIZED THE ALLEGED LACK OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF GERMAN YOUTH, ATTRIBUTING THIS TO INADEQUATE ATTENTION TO THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN FRG SCHOOLS. ERTL ALSO CALLED FOR THE REVAMPING OF THE "GESAMTSCHULE", HERETOFORE THE DARLING OF THE LIBERAL WING OF HIS PARTY.

4. ON THE ISSUE OF PRE-ELECTION COALITION DECLARATIONS, ERTL PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN THE BAVARIAN FDP AND ITS SISTER ORGANIZATIONS IN OTHER FRG LAENDER. REJECTING THE PRACTICE OF ISSUING FIRM COALITION COMMITMENTS BEFORE ELECTIONS, ERTL INSTEAD CALLED ON THE PARTIES TO ISSUE "DIRECTION SIGNALS" REGARDING THEIR POST-ELECTION INTENTIONS. IN SAME BREATH IN WHICH HE NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE RIDICULOUS, IN VIEW OF CSU'S PREPONDERANCE, FOR BAVARIAN FDP TO MAKE A COALITION DECLARATION, ERTL SUGGESTED THAT COALITION WITH CSU WOULD BE CONCEIVABLE UNDER APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. ERTL HAD NO RPT NO KIND WORDS FOR SPD HERE, SAYING GRATUITOUSLY THAT IF SPD EXERCISED THE KIND OF POWER POSSESSED BY CSU, IT WOULD BEHAVE IN VERY SAME MANNER AS CSU.

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6. IN EFFORT TO BOLSTER HIS FOLLOWERS' COURAGE IN DEALING WITH A POSSIBLE ELECTION EFFORT BY THE ECOLOGY-MINDED "GREENS," ERTL TICKED OFF HIS PERSONAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS AS MIN. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE.

7. COMMENT. ERTL IS A SKILLED PRACTITIONER OF THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL. IN CONTRAST TO SOME OF THE MORE INTELLECTUALIST ELEMENTS OF HIS PARTY HERE, ERTL HAS A SOUND FEEL FOR THE MENTALITY OF MAJORITY OF BAVARIAN VOTERS. IF ANY STRATEGY IS LIKELY TO SAVE THE BAVARIAN FDP IN THE FALL, IT WOULD SEEM TO BE ERTL'S. IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT ALTHOUGH ERTL'S LINE PREVAILED AT THE NUERNBERG CONVENTION, MOST OF THE OTHER LEADING PERSONALITIES OF THE BAVARIAN FDP STAND TO ERTL'S LEFT. BETTS

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